

Project Summary Sheet

Project Name: Knaggs Ranch Acquisition

Tracking No: 200784111

Location: Northern Yolo Basin, between the Sacramento River (River Miles 72-76) and the Yolo Bypass west levee.

County: Yolo

Project Sponsor: Sacramento Valley Conservancy

Point of Contact: Aimee Rutledge, (916) 492-0908

Co-applicant(s): None

Assembly District: #8 Lois Wolk **Senate District:** #5 Michael Machado

Project Summary: Sacramento Valley Conservancy (SVC) seeks \$5 million in funding from the Flood Protection Corridor Program (FPCP) to implement the Knaggs Ranch Acquisition project in Yolo County. The project consists of the purchase of the 2,622-acre Knaggs Ranch property and its preservation for agricultural conservation, flood protection, and wildlife habitat. The purchase has been divided into two phases: Phase 1 is the purchase of 937 acres (the Hershey-Woods property) for \$5,700,000 which will come from the FPCP (\$4.5 million) and Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency (\$1.2 million). The balance of the FPCP funds, \$500,000 will be used for an endowment for property management. The Phase 2 purchase for \$8.1 million will come from a SAFCA commitment of \$1.8 million and a \$5 million bridge loan from the Packard Foundation with loan payments to come from agricultural income. The applicant is still seeking \$1.3 million to close the deal. The Sacramento Valley Conservancy will hold fee title to the property and convey a conservation/floodplain easement to the Yolo Land Trust. To raise the 1.3 million, the applicant is talking with Richland Communities to be a part owner that would be allowed to develop mitigation credits for its projects on a small part of the site.

The site is in the northern part of the Yolo Basin, north of Interstate 5 and adjoins the Sacramento River between River Mile 72 and 76. An 850-acre portion of the Phase 2 property lies within the Yolo Bypass; the remainder is east of the Bypass in the levee-surrounded Elkhorn Basin. The Elkhorn Basin comprises Reclamation District 1600 (RD 1600) and is susceptible to flooding in a large flood on the Sacramento River.

The entire project (phase 1 and phase 2) contains the following elements:

- Acquire 2,622 acres of farmland.

- Convey conservation/floodplain easements on the property to the Yolo Land Trust so the property stays in open space, continues to be used for agricultural production, and is not developed with additional structures or orchards susceptible to flood damage.
- Permanently protect agriculture and open space on the site in a way that will not preclude future potential habitat restoration and enhancement of the site.

Continue agricultural production, including grazing or row crop production compatible with Swainson's hawk foraging needs. Allow DWR to use 400 acres as a mitigation bank.

Flood Benefits: Project would prevent development on 30% of Elkhorn Basin adjacent to Central Valley Flood Control Project levees which are part of an important flood water retention and conveyance system. With land on the other side of the Sacramento River rapidly urbanizing, protection of this site provides an important relatively undeveloped area that might flood during extreme flood events releasing pressure on other parts of the flood control system possibly preventing the flooding of nearby urban areas such as the Natomas area. The project would help protect about \$2 billion in damageable property in West Sacramento and about \$30 billion in property in Sacramento and the unincorporated Natomas Basin. Protecting the site from urbanization would forestall the need and cost to upgrade existing agricultural levees to urban, 200-year standards. The applicant said a portion of the site could be used for mitigation for DWR projects that occur in Yolo County. When the Phase I and Phase II purchases are completed, there will still be 5 homes on small parcels and three large parcels still to be acquired (Petrovich 100+ acres, a pistachio orchard of approx. 200 acres, and fallow farmland of 274 acres that has expressed interest in selling a conservation easement).

Agricultural Benefits: Conservation of 2,200 acres of mostly Prime Farmland from urban or ranchette development.

Agricultural Land Conserved: 2,200 acres; 1,772 acres are prime farmland; the balance is mapped as Unique Farmland by the Dept. of Conservation. These are in Bypass and are mapped as unique due to flooding, otherwise would likely be mapped as Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance. A third of the land is in walnuts, the balance is in row crops. Walnut production on some parts of the site is somewhat lower than county average yield due to high water tables, but still viable walnut orchards. The remaining 400 acres would be made available to DWR for development of mixed riparian and shaded riverine aquatic habitat for mitigation of impacts caused by flood control project development and system maintenance.

Wildlife Benefits: The site provides habitat of statewide importance for the Federal and State-listed giant garter snake (Threatened), the state-listed Swainson's hawk (Threatened), wintering waterfowl, Sacramento Splittail, and Chinook salmon. The site includes 850 acres within the Yolo Bypass. The Bypass provides a broad seasonal floodplain, an ecologically-functional landscape that provides important shallow water

spawning and rearing habitat for native fish species that are becoming rare with increased flow regulation and channel modification in rivers.

The project site is adjacent to the Sacramento River corridor, which has a narrow strip of riparian habitat between the river levees along the west bank of the Sacramento River. This riparian forest also provides SRA important to fish species. The vicinity of the site has some of the highest densities of nesting Swainson's hawk and giant garter snake occurrences in California. The Yolo Bypass is a nationally important area for waterfowl.

The Tule Canal and Yolo Bypass provide important and high quality habitat for at least fifteen native fish species.

Wildlife Habitat Conserved: 850 acres of seasonal floodplain seven out of ten years; approximately 14,500 linear feet of SRA along the Site's Sacramento River frontage; and, about 13,600 linear feet of Tule Canal on the east side of the Yolo Bypass, and 400 acres for DWR mitigation bank.

Total area conserved: 2,622 acres including 1,772 acres are inside the Elkhorn Basin

Other Benefits: During the site visit, applicant described possible public education aspects of the project in its latter phases.

Total Cost: \$15,107,500

FPCP Cost: \$5,000,000

Funding Partners and Share of Cost: In-kind funds of \$107,500 and additional funds is \$10,000,000. Of this total, SAFCA has authorized \$1.2 million to apply toward the phase 1 purchase and \$1.8 million toward the phase 2 purchase with \$5 million coming from a bridge loan and \$1.3 million still to be secured.